

Lesson 7

**Rooted in Christ;
He is our Garment...
so live in him, putting on the
new nature**

GETTING STARTED

1. Our Study: Colossians 3:5-17

Overview

The Letter to the Colossians is typical of Paul's letters in that he first discusses doctrines and then relates these doctrines to practical living. While Paul was the great exponent of salvation by faith alone, he also believed that a living faith should manifest itself in a person's life. Throughout his writings he underscores that attitudes and actions reflect a person's inward spiritual life, that person's personal relationship with Christ. In the section for our study in this lesson, Paul seems to be answering the question: "How do we handle our natural drives and cravings?"

Pray that you might "let the Word dwell in you richly" as you study this lesson.

Concerns About the Life in Christ

Have you ever thought of what it would be like to be the spouse of the President of the United States? The "old life" as a private citizen must be "put away" in preference to the "new life" as the spouse of the Chief Executive. There are many things which can no longer be done, while there are other things which must be done as a representative of the country.

This is the way it is with the Christian in a much higher degree.

When you came to faith in Christ as your Savior, you became a member of a new kingdom, you received a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17). But you still have the old nature with which you were born, the nature which is controlled by self and sin. All your life there will be a conflict going on between the old and new natures (Galatians 5:16, 17). Which nature will get the upper hand day to day... moment to moment? Consider what Paul has to say about the two natures.

DIGGING IN... for the facts

2. Put Away the Old Life

Review Colossians 3:1-4. Here we have Paul's summary of what it means to live in Christ. In essence Paul is saying...

- BECAUSE
- you have been raised with Christ (to a new life)
 - you have died with Christ (to the old life)
 - your life is hidden with Christ in God (your security)
 - you are to appear with Christ when He returns (your hope)

THEREFORE... LIVE ACCORDINGLY!

Now let us consider the *therefore*.

Study Colossians 3:5-11

When Paul wrote about the old and the new natures, he had much advice to give. First, he attacks what does not belong in the Christian life. Note the key admonitions. Underline them in your Bible. List what the Colossians were admonished to do and the reasons given.

- A. PUT TO DEATH – the sins of passion and desire.

Which ones? (3:5) _____

Why? (3:6, 7) _____

- B. PUT AWAY – the sins of disposition and speech.

Which ones? (3:8,9) _____

Why? (3:9, 10) _____

- C. What is the relationship of 3:11 to the previous verses and to those which follow? _____

3. Put on the New Life (Colossians 3:12-17)

Christians are not just to put away the sinful desires, habits, and actions of the past life, but they are to manifest the graces and virtues which have their source in the new nature. This new life is to develop more and more into the likeness of Christ. The old nature and the new nature are always at odds with each other, struggling for supremacy. As “Christians”, per se, we want the new life to gain the upper hand... that’s why Paul urges us to set our minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Again, note the key admonitions in this section and the reason for their significance. Underline the key words in your print Bible or highlight them in your digital Bible. Summarize the admonitions in your own words.

- A. CLOTHE YOURSELVES (3:12) _____

BEAR WITH, FORGIVE (3:13) _____

Why? _____

- B. PUT ON (3:14) _____

Why? _____

C. LET (3:15) _____

Why? _____

D. LET (3:16) _____

How and When? _____

E. DO (3:17) _____

DIGGING DEEPER... for understanding

4. What Does Paul Mean?

While Paul was writing to persons who lived some 2,000 years ago, his advice is equally challenging to us today. To gain deeper insight into the meanings of words and phrases, you will find the dictionary very helpful, especially in the study of attitudes and actions Christians are to PUT OFF and PUT ON. Consider some of the following questions:

A. Think about the key phrases in the passage: PUT TO DEATH, RID YOURSELVES, PUT ON, LET RULE, LET DWELL. What is involved as to feelings, will, and actions if a person is to follow each one of these admonitions? Why do you think Paul used each of these key admonitions in the way he did? _____

B. Try matching some of the vices which are to be put to death and to be put away with some of the virtues which are to be put on. In what way will one crowd out the other? What does this tell us about living the Christian life? _____

C. Is it possible for a non-Christian as well as a Christian to follow these admonitions? What will make the difference? What is the work of the Holy Spirit as we seek to put off and put on? What is the place of prayer? _____

D. Which of Paul's admonitions have something to say about our relationship with other church members? ... with other cultures? ... with the members of our personal families? _____

GROWING... in Christ

5. What is Paul Saying to Us?

Growth in Christ is not like climbing a ladder so that “day by day we get better and better.” Rather it is more like a plant growing, gradually embedding its roots more deeply into the soil, producing new branches, blossoms, and fruit. Change comes from within (by the power of the Spirit in the Gospel) and then reveals itself outwardly. The key to growth in Christ is found in Colossians 3:16.

A. Meditate on Colossians 3:16 and memorize it

1. Note WHAT we are to do – *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly....* Think of the starvation diet most of us live on! What are some things you should be doing if the message of Christ is to dwell in you richly?

2. Note the WHEN – *as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom....* Think of worship or corporate Bible study group, sitting together, teaching and encouraging each other, as you share with each other the wisdom which you have gained through personal study and experiences. What can you do to help the members of your congregation grow in their Christian faith? Name three things.

3. Note the HOW – *to God with gratitude in your hearts....* Note the number of times Paul emphasized the importance of thanksgiving in relation to other admonitions. When Christ’s words dwell in our hearts richly, when Christ’s peace rules our hearts, when we share with and encourage each other in study and prayer, how should these experiences fill us with joy and thankfulness? How do they enable us to put off the old nature and put on the new?

B. Apply Paul’s admonitions to daily life

TO PUT ON means to deliberately do something, not because we feel like doing it, but because we are one of God’s chosen ones. How would you apply Paul’s admonitions in the following situations?

1. When you are working or living with someone who is disagreeable? _____

2. When two or more factions begin to develop in a church? _____

3. When you feel bitter about the way someone has treated you? _____

4. When someone disagrees with your interpretation of some doctrines? _____

5. When some lonely person reaches out for your friendship? _____

6. When you view some of the literature and movies of today? _____
